1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

PREFACE

122 THE material presented in this book was collected under the auspices of the Committee for Research on Problems of Sex, National Research Council, Washington, D.C. Their generous financial assistance afforded me an opportunity of studying a primitive people, for which I shall always be grateful. My programme was planned under the guidance of Dr. Clark Wissler, whose sponsorship I acknowledge with warmest thanks.

121 In course of preparation my report has far outgrown the limits within which it was originally designed. If I have exceeded my mandate by including material not directly concerned with problems of sex, I have been encouraged to do so by the terms of a memorandum drawn up by the Committee, wherein it is stated that the field to be covered 'involves the whole ethnic setting, as well as biological, psychological, and social implications'. My own experience as a field-worker has impressed upon me the importance of the 'ethnic setting', which I take to mean the entire physical and cultural background. To give some account of this is the purpose of the second half of the book. I have reserved for publication in separate articles some technical data, including a series of physical measurements and observations, vital records, and a quantity of linguistic material, vocabularies, descriptive texts, and folk-stories.

600 A study of this kind depends so much upon the co-operation of other people that adequate acknowledgement is impossible. I am cognizant of indebtedness to many whose names are not mentioned, and most of all to my Melanesian friends on both sides of Buka Passage, who made my stay among them so pleasant.

The University of Oxford having generously granted me leave of absence from my duties as Demonstrator, I was able to spend a year in the field, from September 29, 1929, to October 8, 1930.

Every field-worker is at times dependent upon the good offices of those in authority over the sphere of his investigations. My thanks are due to Brigadier-General Evan Wisdom, C.M.G., Administrator of the Mandated Territory of New Guinea, and to his staff, among whom I should like to mention especially Major McAdam, District Officer for Buka and Bougainville, and

3: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1932
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FOLK STORIES FROM THE NORTHERN SOLOMONS.

[*Read at a Meeting, 20th January*, 1932.]

114 The stories which form the subject of the present paper were collected between September 1929 and October 1930, while I was living among the natives of Buka and Bougainville, the two most northerly of the Solomon Islands.[1] The first three months were spent on the small island of Petats, off the west coast of Buka; the remaining nine on the north coast of Bougainville, mainly at a village called Kurtatchi, with excursions into the surrounding country as opportunity offered. In consequence of the work of the Methodist [117] Mission, the people of Petats have come to a considerable extent under White influence, but the village of Kurtatchi is still comparatively little affected by contact with the White Man. The examples here given are selected out of a large number, obtained chiefly in these two villages, but as I also took every opportunity of recording stories heard in the course of visits paid to other localities in company with my native friends, my collection is probably fairly representative of the tales told throughout Buka and the northern portion of Bougainville.

126 As a guarantee of good faith, I will first give some account of the circumstances under which the stories were obtained. After my evening meal, I used to hang up my hurricane lantern on that side of my verandah which served as my study. Very soon a little group of natives would gather

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[1] My work in the Solomon Islands was undertaken as part of a programme of field studies initiated by the Institute of Human Relations, University of Yale. My most grateful thanks are due to the Institute for the generous financial support accorded me. The University of Oxford granted me leave of absence from my Demonstratorship in order that I might take advantage of this opportunity.

5: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930)1935
ON6 Buka ON6

TREATMENT OF THE SICK IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS[1]

114 DURING a residence of twelve months among the Melanesians of
121 the north-western Solomon Islands, I had frequent opportunities of watching the natives treat one another for various forms of illness, and of collecting specimens of the plants and other substances which constitute their materia medica. The purpose of this paper is to place on record information given me by the natives themselves. No attempt will be made to deal with the subject from the standpoint of the medical practitioner, a task for which I am not qualified.

114 My information was obtained chiefly from the villages of
126 Kurtatchi and Tabut, on the north coast of Bougainville. It was recorded verbatim in the local dialect, and a sample of each plant was collected at the same time. Unfortunately the incompleteness or imperfect preservation of many specimens rendered their identification impossible. Many of the prescriptions were given by more than one individual independently, or the technique might be the same while the plants differed. For some of the commoner ailments, people seemed to have their own favourite remedies, as do country folk in England. Some of these are secret and were imparted to me in private, others appear to be widely known.

754 It is sometimes said that primitive people regard every kind
757 of sickness as the result of black magic. No one could be more conscious, or more terrified, of the power of black magic, which he calls "bad medicine" or "poison," than is the Solomon Islander, and he is not slow to ascribe his misfortunes to the machinations of some ill-disposed person who has "made poison"

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[1] This paper is based on data collected between Sept. 1929 and Oct. 1930 on the islands of Buka and Bougainville, the most north-westerly of the Solomon group. I am indebted to the committee for research on problems of sex, National Research Council, Washington, D.C., for the opportunity of studying these primitive people, to the experts at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, for the identification of my botanical specimens, and to Prof. C. G. Seligman for useful comments.